



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

November 21, 2006

**TAMPA MAN SENTENCED FOR
UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM**

Tampa, FL - United States District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich today sentenced BENJAMIN SMITH, age 50, of Tampa to a sentence of seven years and three months' imprisonment, to be followed by a term of three years of supervised release. SMITH pled guilty on April 17, 2006 to possession of a firearm while being a convicted felon.

According to court documents, SMITH possessed a loaded .32 caliber handgun and a quantity of narcotics when Tampa Police officers executed a search warrant on his residence at 2905 North 18 Street in Tampa on March 30, 2005. He had been convicted of a number of felony offenses prior to that date.

This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is

to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, with the assistance of the Tampa Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay L. Hoffer of the Tampa Division.